



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913
PH (517) 373.3447 | FAX (517) 373.5849
www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/birkholz/

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 15, 2003

Contact: Amanda Price
(517) 373-3447

Senate Agrees, Boating Hit-and-Run a Felony

Punishment now same as vehicular hit-and-run

LANSING – Legislation imposing stricter sentencing guidelines for boaters involved in hit-and-run accidents was unanimously approved Wednesday by the Senate.

Co-sponsored by Sen. Patty Birkholz (R-Saugatuck Twp), Senate Bills 658 and 659 change the penalties from a misdemeanor to a felony for the operator of a boat involved in a hit-and-run accident resulting in death or serious injury. The change makes the penalty for this crime the same as those for a hit-and-run accident causing death or serious injury in an automobile.

“This legislation is designed to further protect Michigan citizens from irresponsible boaters,” Birkholz said. “Making a hit-and-run a felony will make our lakes and rivers safer for everyone. It also gives law enforcement a more effective tool in cracking down on those who put other citizens at risk.”

Currently, the driver of a boat involved in such an accident is guilty of a misdemeanor and subject to a maximum sentence of 90 days. Under the proposed changes, someone guilty of failing to stop at the scene of a marine accident causing death would be guilty of a felony punishable by up to 15 years in prison and up to \$10,000 in fines. Someone guilty of failing to stop at the scene of a marine accident causing serious impairment would be guilty of a felony punishable by up to five years in prison and up to \$5,000 in fines.

Senate Bills 658 and 659 now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.